

THE PERISCOPE

By
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Up to Governor Cone.
The Everglades Sales Tax Is Not Dead.
"Too Hot to Handle."

Approval of the tentative budget by five members of the cabinet, which would require an in-

crease of nearly seven mills in the state tax rate, has laid upon the doorstep of Governor Cone the responsibility for either taking personal command of the 1939 Legislature or permitting the lawmakers to work out the stormy legislative session without his intervention from the captain or a chart showing the shoals and reefs in the path of the ship of state.

The recommendations of the budget commission, minus the signature of the chief executive, are body substantial increase in appropriations for several major departments as well as salary boosts

for cabinet officers and the governor. But the commissioners, upon many of whom observers in Tallahassee, made public the recommendations without any idea that the findings would meet with the governor's approval.

Approval of the budget by five mem-

bers of the cabinet

in the house and senate

in the Senate

in the House

in the Senate

amounts to, therefore, is simply an itemized list of what the cabinet believed the state government should receive. The present setup is maintained.

Nevertheless, the budget report has put the governor in an ex-

ceedingly tight spot because the

failure to resign

the budget com-

mmission

is a violation

of the constitution

and the law

and the constitution

right to exert over the government since he apparently does not agree with the budget commission, to provide a definite recommendation of his own and this writer believes a recommendation will be contained in the message, contrary to other reports. He insists that the governor will give the Legislature only a sketchy outline upon which to frame a new financial program.

Closely perusal of the budget commission's report, however, reveals a number of interesting facts. First, the report cleared all doubts about the state deficit. There is a short one and a whopping big one. So all the debate between State Comptroller J. M. Lett and State Treasurer W. V. Knott simmers down to a question of simple arithmetic, regardless of "unprinted funds" and other foiled returns.

All the Legislature is interested in is exactly how much money must be provided to meet unpaid bills and get the state out of the red ink. The budget commission's report has answered the question beyond any further argument.

Hence this \$2,000,000 deficit must be placed at the top of any tabulation compiled by finance men. And the short one and this fact alone makes it difficult to believe that the Legislature will repeat any present sources of revenue unless replacement money is in sight. This would indicate that the junction of the gross receipts tax is by far the best, and that the merchants might better concentrate on fighting a state tax.

Florida chain stores are busy contacting members of the Legislature about a proposed bill, which

is to be introduced in the Senate

on March 15.

Proponents of the "recovery

act" are confident their bill will

pass through the House by a comfortable margin but admit the Senate is doubtful. Checking the senate roll-call can predict the result will be defeated by a slender margin of six votes.

Execution of the proposed transaction tax by members of the Florida State Chamber of Commerce is to be given to the death of the measure, an indication of the measure's popularity.

The referendum year an endorsement of President Harold Cole and nothing else.

But the state budget commission is to be asked to make an answer to whether the sales tax has been laid away in mothballs.

If the Legislature does not approve an increase of almost seven mills in the state tax rate, then new revenue must be found somewhere.

So how can any reasonable person believe that the sales tax is a dead issue?

There won't be any changes made in the present gasoline-tax allocation, insofar as the distribution to the counties is concerned.

But evidence of this was found in the statement of a legislator at the recent conference in Ft. Lauderdale. Asked if the conference would take up a re-shuffle of the gas tax, the solon

said he had no objection.

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